Access for patients – and other ways to get Elsevier articles without a subscription

We're updating our list of free and low-cost article access programs, including patient/caregiver access

By Tom Reller, Torie Eva and William Gunn, PhD - January 22, 2020

Through Elsevier, researchers publish work that can change the world in ways big and small. Scientific breakthroughs, studies on rare diseases, researchers making a difference in their communities (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/atlas) – these can all be found in the journals we publish.

If you're reading this, there's a good chance you want to read those papers.

Here, we'll show you how to even if you don't have access through a university or other institution.

While there are thousands of articles available via open access publishing (https://www.elsevier.com/about/open-science/open-access), where an author or funder covers the publishing costs up-front so readers don’t have to, what we’re looking at here are free or very low-cost access initiatives – where we make subscription articles freely available for various reasons or provide access to our ScienceDirect (https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/sciencedirect) platform for certain groups of users.

We have a dedicated page for these programs on the Elsevier website (https://www.elsevier.com/about/open-science/science-and-society) and felt it would be helpful to highlight them together here. As we continue to listen to the research community and the public, we are adding more programs, and you’ll always see the updated list at the link above.

Access for patients and caregivers
(https://www.elsevier.com/about/open-science/science-and-society/access-for-healthcare-and-patients)

We want to call attention to the way patients and their caregivers can access information for free. With our Patient Access Program (https://www.elsevier.com/about/open-science/science-and-society/access-
for-healthcare-and-patients), they can receive medical or healthcare related research papers by emailing patientaccess@elsevier.com. This email is constantly monitored by our support teams, who aim to provide individual articles at no cost to patients and caregivers within 24 hours. Requesters simply need to include the article title and authors, date published, and/or the DOI or URL if available so we can locate the article as quickly as possible.

We understand that people contending with medical conditions would find it beneficial to access scientific information quickly and easily, and we hope this service provides that support. Please feel free to contact us through the patient access address above with any questions about this program and, of course, any ways we can improve it.

Other free access programs

Other programs where we provide free access to research include:

- **Share Links** (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/share-links-let-authors-share-their-new-publications-for-free) — Authors who publish with Elsevier receive a link to their published article that provides 50 days’ free access, which they can share with their networks.

- **We are making clinical review articles and book chapters on rare and undiagnosed diseases free for 60 days beginning on Rare Disease Day, February 29, 2020. Find the full list here** (https://www.elsevier.com/about/press-releases/clinical-solutions/elsevier-offers-free-content-for-rare-disease-day)

- **Postdoc Free Access Program** (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/postdoc-free-access-program-is-now-ongoing) — We provide free access to scientific content to support young scholars between jobs or looking for their first postdoctoral position.

- **Featured articles** (http://www.virologyhighlights.com) and special issues (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/how-chemistry-colors-our-world) — We regularly provide articles and issues to researchers through promotional campaigns that include free access for a limited period.

- **Open data** (https://www.elsevier.com/authors/author-resources/research-data/open-data) — Authors can upload their raw research data as a supplementary file, which is then published open access – free of charge – next to their article on ScienceDirect.

- **New journals** (http://www.sciencedirect.com) — When we launch a new journal, it is often made free access until it is established.

- **Atlas Award** (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/atlas) — Researchers who published an outstanding peer-reviewed article with the potential to benefit and advance progress in our shared planet are recognized with Elsevier’s Atlas Award. The articles here are made freely available and summarized to be easily understood by people outside the research community, while author interviews are made public to encourage the dissemination or implementation of their findings.
• Media access (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/free-access-to-sciencedirect-for-journalists) — We provide credentialed science journalists around the world — currently more than 2,000 — with unrestricted media access, helping them interpret and report on scientific findings for the public. Plus, whenever a journal article is linked to in the news story itself, we make it freely available, such as swine fever (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/african-swine-fever-poses-a-serious-threat-to-global-food-security-experts-say).

• Nobel Prize winners' research (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/celebrating-the-2019-nobel-laureates-with-free-access-to-their-research) and topical issues (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/african-swine-fever-poses-a-serious-threat-to-global-food-security-experts-say) — We share collections of articles on topical issues, like swine fever and Nobel Prize winners' work, with free access to the research. We’ll do this for sponsored programs as well, such as the Golden Goose Awards (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/3-mindsets-that-led-to-scientific-breakthroughs).

• Public libraries (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/free-access-to-research-at-your-local-uk-public-library) — Anyone can access ScienceDirect through walk-in user access at any participating library in the UK via the Access to Research (http://www.accesstoresearch.org.uk) program and at hundreds of public libraries around the world. Our standard license also gives university libraries around the world the option to allow free walk-in access.

• Research4Life (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/research4life-provides-access-to-research-in-developing-world) — As a founding partner, Elsevier contributes (https://www.elsevier.com/about/corporate-responsibility/research4life) over a quarter of the nearly 50,000 free and low-cost peer reviewed resources in Research4Life (http://www.research4life.org), encompassing ScienceDirect (http://www.elsevier.com/solutions/sciencedirect), Scopus (http://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus) and ClinicalKey (https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/clinicalkey/why-clinicalkey), including over 3,100 Elsevier journals and 13,000 books. In 2017, there were over 2.4 million Research4Life article downloads from ScienceDirect. We also provide extensive in-kind expertise and financial resources to advance usage, outreach and training and have committed to the program through 2025.

• Library of Alexandria (https://www.elsevier.com/connect/dutch-royal-tropical-institute-passes-the-baton-to-the-library-of-alexandria-in-egypt) — Elsevier partners with the Library of Alexandria in Egypt to provide access to ScienceDirect and Scopus to individual researchers in the least developed and low-income countries.

NIH/NLM Emergency Access Initiative (https://eai.nlm.nih.gov) to make our health and medical titles available during global health, disaster or emergency events, most recently during Hurricanes Irma, Harvey and Maria and the Mexico earthquakes.

- CHORUS (http://www.chorusaccess.org) – We open manuscripts for over 400,000 research articles arising from 12 US federal research funding agencies, with tens of thousands added every year.
- SDG Resource Centre (https://sdgresources.relx.com) – As part of our commitment for the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we curate with scientific articles, reports, events and much more around the SDGs. The papers included are made freely available.

That’s 15 programs, and we are open to ideas for more. in addition to these programs, there are 731,000 preprints available on SSRN (https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/ssrn) and 3 million on bepress (https://www.bepress.com). Our aim is to ensure that our programs make available as much research as possible that is helpful and relevant to the people who need it most.

If you have an idea for a program or know of a population that’s currently underserved, please let us know in the comments below.

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